

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 SS-20 NSC-10 MC-02 DRC-01 /133 W

----- 129560

P R 171422Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4863

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

S E C R E T LONDON 12043

VIENNA FOR MBFR DEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO, UK, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR - PRE-REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS

REF: STATE 204145; BONN 14949

1. WE SAW TICKELL AND BRAITHWAITE OCTOBER 16 TO ADVISE THEM OF US POSITION ON PRE-REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS AND REQUEST THEIR VIEWS.
2. BOTH REACTED POSITIVELY TO US IDEAS ON HANDLING PRE-REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS, WHICH THEY SAID WERE IN GENERAL ACCORD WITH BRITISH VIEWS. THEY AGREED WITH US ON NECESSITY OF MAKING URGENT REVIEW OF SUCH MEASURES IN ALLIANCE. BRITISH HAVE NO QUARREL WITH BASIC QUESTIONS US PROPOSES FOR REVIEW. BRAITHWAITE STATED THAT UK DOES NOT INTEND TO PREPARE PAPER ON PRE-REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS; UK WILL LEAVE IT TO OTHERS TO PUT FORWARD IDEAS IN NATO EXAMINATION OF ISSUE. HE INQUIRED ABOUT US PAPER ON SUBJECT AND ASKED WHETHER UK MIGHT SEE IT IN ADVANCE OF CIRCULATION IN NATO.

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(COMMENT: WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING ADVISED OF STATUS

OF PAPER AND WHETHER IT IS INTENDED TO CONSULT BRITISH
ON IT IN ADVANCE OF PRESENTATION TO ALLIES.)

3. OPINIONS BRAITHWAITE EXPRESSED MAY BE SUMMARIZED
AS FOLLOWS: CONSTRAINTS OF ALL KINDS ARE COMPLICATED
AND PROBABLY ARE NOT OF GREAT PRACTICAL VALUE. FIRM
BRITISH VIEW IS THAT CONSTRAINTS SHOULD IF AT ALL
POSSIBLE APPLY TO WARSAW PACT AND NOT NATO. IF THEY
MUST APPLY TO WEST ALSO, BRITISH THINK THAT THEY
SHOULD BE APPLICABLE TO US NOT TO EUROPEAN FORCES. HE
HASTILY ADDED THAT BRITISH REALIZE THAT THIS MAY NOT
BE WHOLLY REALISTIC. OVERRIDING CONCERN OF BRITISH
CONTINUES TO BE THAT MBFR SHOULD NOT HINDER EUROPEAN
EFFORTS AT DEVELOPING COOPERATIVE DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS.

4. VIEWS IN PARA 3 ABOVE ARE FIRM BRITISH POSITIONS
ON GENERAL QUESTION OF CONSTRAINTS. OFFICIAL LEVEL
THINKING ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF CONSTRAINTS IS TENDING
IN FOLLOWING DIRECTION: IN PRE-REDUCTITN PERIOD
CONSTRAINTS COULD BE PRIMARILY OF DECLARATORY
CHARACTER; BRAITHWAITE INDICATED THAT WORKING LEVEL IS
NOT INCLINED TO FRET VERY MUCH ABOUT WHETHER PRE-
REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS SHOULD BE FORMALLY BINDING OR
VERY SPECIFIC SINCE RUSSIANS WILL PROBABLY DO WHAT THEY
FEEL THEY WANT TO DO ABOUT THEIR FORCES IN THAT PERIOD.
AS FAR AS CONSTRAINTS TO ACCOMPANY OR FOLLOW
REDUCTIONS ARE CONCERNED, BRITISH OFFICIAL LEVEL VIEW
IS THAT NATO SHOULD TRY TO NEGOTIATE MAXIMUM
VERIFICATION PROVISIONS MODIFIED BY A GENERAL ESCAPE
CLAUSE (AS IN CASE OF SALT). IN SPECIFIC ANSWER TO
SPECIFIC US INQUIRY, BRAITHWAITE STRESSED THAT BRITISH
ARE NOT INCLINED TO FUSS VERY MUCH ABOUT TRYING TO
NEGOTIATE CONSTRAINTS AS PRE-REDUCTION MEASURES; THEY
COULD CONTEMPLATE MEASURES ACCOMPANYING REDUCTIONS.
SUMMING UP, BRAITHWAITE SAID THAT HE REGARDED THE REAL
CONSTRAINTS AS THE POLITICAL FACTORS OPERATING ON
RUSSIANS AND THEIR ALLIES.

5. BRAITHWAITE STRESSED THAT VIEWS HE EXPRESSED IN
PARA 4 ABOVE REFLECT ONLY OFFICIAL LEVEL THINKING.

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MINISTERS ARE NOW REVIEWING STEERING BRIEF FOR UK MBFR
DEL. BRAITHWAITE PROMISED TO DISCUSS CONSTRAINTS
QUESTION WITH US AGAIN WHEN MINISTERIAL APPROVAL HAS
BEEN GIVEN TO STEERING BRIEF WHICH HE THOUGHT WOULD BE
DONE VERY SHORTLY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: worrelsw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LONDON12043
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 ANNENBERG
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731027/aaaaatsa.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 204145; BONN 14949
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: worrelsw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25-Jul-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2002 by worrelsw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR - PRE-REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS
TAGS: PARM, UK, GE, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005